



How to be steadfast

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In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful





Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you
in good health and imaan.

On behalf of our AMAU Academy team, we would like
to present to you these compiled notes that we have
prepared to make your journey with us a lot easier.

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May Allah make our paths toward seeking
beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts
with sincerity and gratefulness
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran



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جل جلاله | Jalla Jalāluhu
Allah the Most Exalted



صلى الله عليه وسلم | Sallāllāhu Alayhi Wa Sallam
Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him



رضي الله عنه | RadiAllahu `anhu
May Allah be pleased with him



رضي الله عنها | RadiAllahu `anha
May Allah be pleased with her



رحمه الله | Rahimahullah
May Allah have mercy upon him

Steadfastness Is a Divine Blessing

Chapter One

In many verses from Allāh’s Book, He ﷻ connects Himself to the guidance to His straight path. The whole affair is by His hand; He guides whom he wills and misguides whom He wills. By His hand ﷻ are the hearts of the slaves so whoever He wills He makes him steadfast and whoever He wills He deviates him from it.

1 Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنِ اقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَوْ اخْرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ مَا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا - وَإِذَا لَأَتَيْنَاهُم مِّن لَّدُنَّا أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا - وَلَهْدَيْنَاهُمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا﴾

“If We had commanded them to sacrifice themselves or abandon their homes, none would have obeyed except for a few. Had they done what they were advised to do, it would have certainly been far better for them and more reassuring, and We would have granted them a great reward by Our grace and guided them to the Straight Path.”

Ṣurah An-Nisā: 66-68

2 Therefore, guidance to the straight path is in Allāh’s hand alone. Allāh the Most High said:

﴿فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمًا﴾

“As for those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him, He will admit them into His mercy and grace and guide them to Himself through the Straight Path.”

Ṣurah An-Nisā: 175

3 Also, Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

“And Allah invites ‘all’ to the Home of Peace and guides whoever He wills to the Straight Path.”

Ṣurah Yūnus: 25

4 Also, Allāh ﷻ says:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمٌّ وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ ۚ مَن يَشَاءِ اللَّهُ يُضْلِلْهُ وَمَن يَشَاءِ يُجْعَلْهُ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

“Those who deny Our signs are ‘wilfully’ deaf and dumb—lost in darkness. Allah leaves whoever He wills to stray and guides whoever He wills to the Straight Way.”

Ṣurah An-An’ām: 39

5 Also, the Most High said:

﴿وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

“Allah ‘only’ guides whoever He wills to the Straight Path.”

Ṣurah An-Nūr: 46

6 Also, the Most High said:

﴿إِن هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ - لِمَن شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَن يَسْتَقِيمَ - وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“Surely this ‘Quran’ is only a reminder to the whole world—to whoever of you wills to take the Straight Way. But you cannot will ‘to do so’, except by the Will of Allah, the Lord of all worlds.”

Ṣurah At-Takwīr: 27-29

These verses demonstrate that guidance is in Allāh's hand. By it, He blesses whom He wills from His slaves.

For this reason, receiving steadfastness is based upon seeking it from Allāh, as it is in His hand.

- 7 Therefore, this was the subject of most of the supplications of the Prophet ﷺ, as he said:

"يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ"

"O turner of the hearts, affirm my heart upon your religion!"

Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها said: O Messenger of Allāh! Do the hearts really turn? The Prophet ﷺ said:

"نَعَمْ، مَا مِنْ خَلْقٍ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ بَشَرٍ،
إِلَّا أَنْ قَلْبَهُ بَيْنَ أُصْبُعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَقَامَهُ، وَإِنْ شَاءَ أَزَاغَهُ"

"Yes, there is not anyone from Allāh's creation, from the children of Ādam, from mankind, except that his heart is between the two fingers of Allāh. If Allāh wills, He makes him upright, and if He wills He deviates him."

Musnad Ahmad 26576, Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī 3522, and authenticated by al-Albānī in al-Ṣaḥīḥah 2091

Verily, steadfastness is in the hand of Allāh. So whoever wants it for himself, then he should seek it from Allāh and persist in asking for it.

- 8 It has been reported from the hadīth of 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that she was asked regarding that which the Prophet ﷺ would say when commencing the night prayer. She said:

"كَانَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَفْتَتِحُ صَلَاتَهُ إِذَا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ قَالَتْ كَانَ إِذَا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ افْتَتَحَ صَلَاتَهُ:
اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرَائِيلَ وَمِيكَائِيلَ وَإِسْرَافِيلَ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ
فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ"

"When he got up at night he would commence his prayer with these words: O Allah, Lord of Jibra'eel, Meeka'eel and Israfeel, Creator of the heavens and the Earth, Knower of the seen and the unseen. You are the arbitrator between Your slaves in that which they have disputed. Guide me to the truth by Your leave, in that which they have differed, for verily You guide whom You will to a straight path."

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 770

- 9 Therefore, he ﷺ would say every night in the beginning of the night prayer:

"إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ"

"Verily You guide whom You will to a straight path."

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 770

- 10 The importance of this request is demonstrated through the obligation to ask for guidance to the straight path continually day and night in the prayer. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ - صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾

"Guide us along the Straight Path, the Path of those You have blessed—not those You are displeased with, or those who are astray."

Ṣurah Al-Fātiḥah: 6-7

11 Al-Hasan Al-Basrī رحمته الله used to say when he read the saying of Allāh جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا﴾

“Surely those who say: Our Lord is Allah, and then remain steadfast”

Ṣurah Fussilat: 30

"اللهمَّ فأنْتَ ربنا فارزقنا الاستقامة"

“O’ Allāh! You are our Lord, so grant us steadfastness”

Tafsīr al-Tabarī 21/465

12 Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said:

"تَأَمَّلْتُ أَنْفَعَ الدُّعَاءِ فَإِذَا هُوَ سُؤَالُ الْعَوْنِ عَلَى مَرْضَاتِهِ،
ثُمَّ رَأَيْتُهُ فِي الْفَاتِحَةِ فِي {إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ}"

“I contemplated over what was the most beneficial supplication, and I found it to be to ask for aid in Allāhs pleasure, then I saw it in al-Fātihah: You ‘alone’ we worship and You ‘alone’ we ask for help.”

Madārij al-Sālikīn By Ibn al-Qayyim 1/78

He also said:

"أمر العبد بدوام دعاء الله سبحانه بالهداية إلى الاستقامة"

“The slave is ordered with constant supplication Allāh – the glorified – for guidance to steadfastness.”

Iqtidā al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm 1/83

The Reality of Steadfastness

Chapter Two

In order for one to be steadfast, they need to understand the reality of steadfastness. As the Scholars say: Placing a ruling on a matter, is subsidiary to the correct perception.

There are great scholars of Islam from the companions and those after them who explained the reality of steadfastness:

The truthful of this Ummah, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه said, regarding the statement of the Most High:

1

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا﴾
“Surely those who say: Our Lord is Allah, and then remain steadfast”

هم الذين لم يشركوا بالله شيئا

“They are those who never associated partners with Allāh”

Tafsīr al-Tabarī 21/464

It has been narrated from ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb رضي الله عنه that he recited this verse on the pulpit:

2

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا﴾
“Surely those who say: Our Lord is Allah, and then remain steadfast”

Then said:

لم يروغوا روغان الثعلب

“They are never deceitful like the deceitful fox”

Tafsīr al-Tabarī 21/465

Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه stated regarding the statement of Allāh جل جلاله:

3

﴿ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا﴾
“then remain steadfast”

على شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله

“Upon the testimony that there is none worthy of worship [in truth] except Allāh”

Tafsīr al-Tabarī 21/465-466

Similar to this has been narrated from; Anas, Mujāhid, al-Aswad Ibn Hilāl, Zayd Ibn Aslam, al-Suddī, ‘Ikrimah and other than them.

It has also been narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that he said:

4

على أداء فرائضه
“[Steadfastness] upon fulfilling the obligations”

Tafsīr al-Tabarī 21/465

Abī al-Āliyah said:

5

"على أن أخلصوا له الدين والعمل"

“[Steadfastness] upon sincerity in their religion and actions”

Al-Nukat wal-‘Uyūn by al-Māwardī 5/275

Qatādah stated regarding the statement of the Most High:

6

﴿ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا﴾

“then remain steadfast”

"اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ"

“Steadfastness upon the obedience of Allāh”

Al-Musannaf by ‘Abd al-Razzāq 2618

Ibn Rajab defined steadfastness and said:

7

"وَالِاسْتِقَامَةُ: هِيَ سُلُوكُ الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ، وَهُوَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ مِنْ غَيْرِ تَعْرِيجٍ عَنْهُ يُمْنَةً وَلَا يُسْرَةً، وَيَشْمَلُ ذَلِكَ فِعْلَ الطَّاعَاتِ كُلِّهَا، الظَّاهِرَةِ وَالْبَاطِنَةِ، وَتَرْكَ الْمَنْهِيَّاتِ كُلِّهَا كَذَلِكَ، فَصَارَتْ هَذِهِ الْوَصِيَّةُ جَامِعَةً لِخِصَالِ الدِّينِ كُلِّهَا."

“Steadfastness is: treading upon the straight path, which is the correct religion without any corruption. That includes performing all the obedient acts, apparent and hidden, and leaving all the forbidden acts. Therefore, this is a comprehensive advice for the characteristics of the whole religion.”

Jāmi’ al-‘Ulūm wal-Hikam p.383-384

Ibn Rajab was referring to narration wherein the Prophet ﷺ advised a man and said:

8

"قُلْ آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ فَاسْتَقِمْ"

“Say I affirm my faith in Allah and then remain steadfast”

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 38

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

9

"فَالِاسْتِقَامَةُ كَلِمَةٌ جَامِعَةٌ، آخِذَةٌ بِمَجَامِعِ الدِّينِ. وَهِيَ الْقِيَامُ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ عَلَى حَقِيقَةِ الصِّدْقِ، وَالْوَفَاءِ بِالْعَهْدِ."

“Steadfastness is a comprehensive term which comprises the whole of the religion. It is standing between the hands of Allāh with true honesty and fulfilling the covenant.”

Madārij al-Sālikīn By Ibn al-Qayyim 2/105

The Foundation Is the Heart

Chapter Three

Imām Ahmad reported from the hadīth of Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said:

1

"لَا يَسْتَقِيمُ إِيْمَانُ عَبْدٍ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ قَلْبُهُ"

“The īmān of a slave is not steadfast until the heart is steadfast”

Musnad Ahmad 13048, and graded as Hasan by al-Albānī in al-Ṣaḥīḥah 2841

This indicates that the foundation of steadfastness is the steadfastness of the heart. For verily, if the heart is rectified and steadfast the body will follow.

Al-Hāfidh Ibn Rajab said:

2

"فَأَصْلُ الْإِسْتِقَامَةِ اسْتِقَامَةُ الْقَلْبِ عَلَى التَّوْحِيدِ، كَمَا فَسَّرَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقُ وَغَيْرُهُ قَوْلَهُ: {إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا} بِأَنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَلْتَفِتُوا إِلَى غَيْرِهِ، فَمَتَى اسْتَقَامَ الْقَلْبُ عَلَى مَعْرِفَةِ اللَّهِ، وَعَلَى خَشْيَتِهِ، وَإِجْلَالِهِ، وَمَهَابَتِهِ، وَمَحَبَّتِهِ، وَإِرَادَتِهِ، وَرَجَائِهِ، وَدُعَائِهِ، وَالتَّوَكُّلِ عَلَيْهِ، وَالْإِعْرَاضِ عَمَّا سِوَاهُ، اسْتَقَامَتِ الْجَوَارِحُ كُلُّهَا عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ، فَإِنَّ الْقَلْبَ هُوَ مَلِكُ الْأَعْضَاءِ، وَهِيَ جُنُودُهُ، فَإِذَا اسْتَقَامَ الْمَلِكُ، اسْتَقَامَتِ جُنُودُهُ وَرَعَايَاهُ"

“The foundation of steadfastness is steadfastness of the heart upon Tawhīd. As Abū Bakr al-Siddīq and others explained [Allāh’s] statement: (Surely those who say: Our Lord is Allah, and then remain steadfast) as those who never turned to other than Him. Therefore, when the heart is upright and steadfast upon the knowledge of Allāh, upon fearing Him, upon His greatness, upon His sublimity, upon His love, upon His will, upon His hope, upon His supplication, trusting in Him and turning away from other than Him, then all the limbs will become steadfast upon obedience to Him. The heart is the king of the limbs, and they are his army. If the king is upright, then so will be his army and subjects.”

Jāmi’ al-‘Ulūm wal-Hikam p.386

For this reason, Allāh ﷻ said:

3

﴿يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ - إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ﴾

“the Day when neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit. Only those who come before Allah with a pure heart ‘will be saved’.”

Ṣurah Ash-Shu‘arā: 88-89

Also, it was from the supplications of the Prophet ﷺ:

4

"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ قَلْبًا سَلِيمًا"

“O’ Allāh! I ask You for a sound heart.”

Musnad Ahmad 17114, Sunan al-Nasā’ī 1304, and al-Albānī in al-Ṣaḥīḥah 2328

Aim for Perfection

Chapter Four

No-one is perfect, however, one should aim to come as close to perfection as possible.

1 The Prophet ﷺ said:

"إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ، وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ، فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا"

“Verily, the religion is easy and no one burdens himself in religion but that it overwhelms him. Follow the right course, seek closeness [to perfection] and give glad tidings.”

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 39 and 6463

One should try their best to be close to perfection, and always remember that Allāh loves those who are consistent.

2 The Prophet ﷺ said:

"وَأَنَّ أَحَبَّ الْأَعْمَالِ أَدْوَمُهَا إِلَى اللَّهِ، وَإِنْ قَلَّ"

“The most beloved deed to Allah is the most regular and constant even if it were little”

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6464

Therefore, that which is sought for in regards to steadfastness is al-Saddād; which is to be in line with the Sunnah.

3 The Prophet ﷺ stated to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه , when he requested to be taught a supplication he could use:

"اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي وَسَلِّدْنِي وَادْكُرْ بِالْهُدَى هِدَايَتِكَ الطَّرِيقَ وَالسَّادِدِ سَدَادَ السَّهْمِ"

“O Allah, guide me and grant me al-Saddād [in line with the Sunnah], and when you remember guidance, keep in mind the right path and [when you remember] al-Saddād, keep in mind the straightness of the arrow.”

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2725

4 Allāh عز وجل said:

﴿فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ﴾

“So be steadfast towards Him, and seek His forgiveness”

Surah Fussilat: 6

The mentioning of forgiveness after the order of steadfastness shows that the servant will inevitably fall short whenever he strives for steadfastness. This is why Ibn Rajab said:

"وَفِي قَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: {فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ} إِشَارَةٌ إِلَى أَنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ مِنْ تَقْصِيرٍ فِي الْإِسْتِقَامَةِ الْمَأْمُورِ بِهَا، فَيُجِبُ ذَلِكَ بِالِاسْتِغْفَارِ الْمُفْتَضِيِّ لِلتَّوْبَةِ وَالرُّجُوعِ إِلَى الْإِسْتِقَامَةِ، فَهُوَ كَقَوْلِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِمُعَاذٍ: «اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ، وَاتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا». وَقَدْ أَخْبَرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ النَّاسَ لَنْ يُطِيقُوا الْإِسْتِقَامَةَ حَقَّ الْإِسْتِقَامَةِ، كَمَا خَرَجَهُ الْإِمَامُ أَحْمَدُ، وَابْنُ مَاجَهٍ مِنْ حَدِيثِ ثَوْبَانَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: «اسْتَقِيمُوا وَلَنْ تُحْصُوا، وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ خَيْرَ أَعْمَالِكُمُ الصَّلَاةُ، وَلَا يُحَافِظُ عَلَى الْوُضُوءِ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنٌ»، وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ لِلْإِمَامِ أَحْمَدَ: «سَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا، وَلَا يُحَافِظُ عَلَى الْوُضُوءِ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنٌ» وَفِي "الصَّحِيحَيْنِ" عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: «سَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا»

فَالسَّادُّ: هُوَ حَقِيقَةُ الْإِسْتِقَامَةِ، وَهُوَ الْإِصَابَةُ فِي جَمِيعِ الْأَقْوَالِ وَالْأَعْمَالِ وَالْمَقَاصِدِ، كَالَّذِي يَرْمِي إِلَى غَرَضٍ، فَيُصِيبُهُ، وَقَدْ أَمَرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلِيًّا أَنْ يَسْأَلَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ السَّادَّ وَالْهُدَى، وَقَالَ لَهُ: «ادْكُرْ بِالسَّادِّ تَسْدِيدَكَ السَّهْمَ، وَبِالْهُدَى هِدَايَتَكَ الطَّرِيقَ»

وَالْمُقَارَبَةُ: أَنْ يُصِيبَ مَا قَرُبَ مِنَ الْغَرَضِ إِذَا لَمْ يُصِبِ الْغَرَضَ نَفْسَهُ، وَلَكِنْ بِشَرْطِ أَنْ يَكُونَ مُصَمِّمًا عَلَى قَصْدِ السَّادِّ وَإِصَابَةِ الْغَرَضِ، فَتَكُونُ مُقَارَبَتُهُ عَنْ غَيْرِ عَمْدٍ وَيَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ قَوْلُ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي حَدِيثِ الْحَكَمِ بْنِ حُزْنٍ الْكَلْفِيِّ: «أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَعْمَلُوا - أَوْ لَنْ تُطِيقُوا - كُلَّ مَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ سَدِّدُوا وَأَبْشَرُوا» وَالْمَعْنَى: اقْصِدُوا التَّسْدِيدَ وَالْإِصَابَةَ وَالْإِسْتِقَامَةَ، فَإِنَّهُمْ لَوْ سَدَّدُوا فِي الْعَمَلِ كُلِّهِ، لَكَانُوا قَدْ فَعَلُوا مَا أُمِرُوا بِهِ كُلِّهِ

“In His (ﷺ) saying: (So be steadfast towards Him, and seek His forgiveness) is an indication that it is inevitable to fall short of the steadfastness that we have been ordered with. The rectification of this is by seeking forgiveness, which mandates repentance and returning to steadfastness. It is like the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) to Mu’adh: Fear Allāh wherever you are and follow a bad deed with a good deed to wipe it away. The Prophet (ﷺ) informs us that people will never be able to achieve true steadfastness. Imām Ahmad and Ibn Mājah reported from the hadīth of Thawbān that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Be steadfast although you will never encompass it and know that the best action is the prayer and only the believer is diligent upon performing the ablution. In the wording of Imām Ahmad: Have Saddād and Muqārabah and only the believer is diligent upon performing the ablution. Also, in the two Ṣaḥīḥ books on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Have Saddād and Muqārabah.

Al-Saddād is the reality of steadfastness. It is to be correct in all of your speech, actions and intentions. Like the one who shoots at a target and hits it. The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered ‘Alī to ask Allāh for al-Saddād and guidance and he said to him: and when you remember guidance, keep in mind the right path and [when you remember] al-Saddād, keep in mind the straightness of the arrow.

al-Muqārabah is to hit close to the target without actually hitting the target itself. Although, this is with the condition that the person’s intends for al-Saddād and achieving the goal, so the Muqārabah results unintentionally. The proof for this is the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): O mankind, you will never do everything you have been ordered with but have Saddād and Muqārabah. The meaning of intend al-Tasdīd is to be perfect and steadfast. If they are perfect in all their actions, then they will have completed all that they were ordered to do.”

Speech, Actions and Intentions

Chapter Five

The steadfastness that is sought from the servant is steadfastness of the speech, actions and intentions. This means that the speech of the servant, his limbs should all be upon steadfastness.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمته الله said:

"وَالِاسْتِقَامَةُ تَتَعَلَّقُ بِالْأَقْوَالِ، وَالْأَفْعَالِ، وَالْأَحْوَالِ، وَالنِّيَّاتِ"

1

"Steadfastness is concerned with the speech, actions, situations and intentions."

Madārij al-Sālikīn By Ibn al-Qayyim 2/105

It has been reported by Imām Ahmad, on the authority of Anas رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"لَا يَسْتَقِيمُ إِيْمَانُ عَبْدٍ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ قَلْبُهُ ، وَلَا يَسْتَقِيمُ قَلْبُهُ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ لِسَانُهُ"

2

"The īmān of a slave is not steadfast until the heart is steadfast, and the heart is not steadfast until the tongue is steadfast"

Musnad Ahmad 13048, and graded as Hasan by al-Albānī in al-Ṣaḥīḥah 2841

This demonstrates the relationship between the internal and external.

Ibn Rajab رحمته الله said:

"وَأَعْظَمُ مَا يُرَاعَى اسْتِقَامَتُهُ بَعْدَ الْقَلْبِ مِنَ الْجَوَارِحِ اللِّسَانُ، فَإِنَّهُ تُرْجَمَانُ الْقَلْبِ وَالْمُعَبَّرُ عَنْهُ"

3

"The greatest thing that takes care of steadfastness after the heart is the tongue. For it is the translator and interpreter of the heart."

Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam p.386

Some of the people of knowledge say:

4

"المرء بأصغريه قلبه ولسانه"

"A man is [known] by his two small parts: his heart and tongue."

The proof for the heart is the speech of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ"

5

"Verily, in the body is a piece of flesh which, if sound, the entire body is sound, and if corrupt, the entire body is corrupt. Truly, it is the heart."

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 52 and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1599

The proof for the tongue as reported by al-Tirmidhī on the authority of Abī Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

إِذَا أَصْبَحَ ابْنُ آدَمَ فَإِنَّ الْأَعْضَاءَ كُلَّهَا تُكْفِّرُ اللِّسَانَ فَتَقُولُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ فِينَا فَإِنَّمَا نَحْنُ بِكَ
فَإِنْ اسْتَقَمَّتْ اسْتَقَمْنَا وَإِنْ اعْوَجَجَتْ اعْوَجَجْنَا

6

“When the son of Ādam awakes, all his limbs implore the tongue, and say: Fear Allāh in regards to us, for verily we can only follow you. If you are upright, we are upright. If you are crooked, then we too are crooked.”

Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī 2407 and Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb by al-Albānī 2871

When the heart and tongue are upon steadfastness, the rest of the body will follow. However, if these two become corrupted, then the rest of the body will also follow.

Three Criteria for Steadfastness

Chapter Six

There is no steadfastness except for Allāh, with Allāh and upon the command of Allāh.

1 For Allāh: i.e. sincerely for Him, meaning, the servant is steadfast and follows Allāh’s straight path, being sincerely devoted, by way of that, in all matters for Allāh ﷻ, seeking His reward and His pleasure.

As Allāh ﷻ said:

1 ﴿وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ﴾
“Even though they were only commanded to worship Allah ‘alone’ with sincere devotion to Him”
Surah Al-Bayyinah: 5

With Allāh: i.e. aided by Him upon the implementation of steadfastness.

2

As Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ﴾
“So worship Him and put your trust in Him.”
Surah Hūd: 123

1

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾
“You ‘alone’ we worship and You ‘alone’ we ask for help.”
Surah Al-Fātihah: 5

2

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“اِحْرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ”
“Be eager for what benefits you, and seek help from Allah”
Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2664

3

3 Upon the command of Allāh: i.e. to treat upon steadfastness in the correct manner, and to continue on the straight path with what Allāh has ordered his servants.

As Allāh ﷻ said:

1 ﴿فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ﴾
“So be steadfast as you are commanded”
Surah Hūd: 112

Some narrations from the Salaf have already been mentioned in agreement with this meaning. For example, the saying of Ibn ‘Abbās in regards to the verse:

2

﴿ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا﴾

“then remain steadfast”

"على أداء فرائضه"

“[Steadfastness] upon fulfilling the obligations”

Tafsīr al-Tabarī 21/465

Reliance Upon Actions Alone

Chapter Seven

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"سَدُّوْا وَقَارِبُوْا، وَأَبْشِرُوْا، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُدْخِلُ أَحَدًا الْجَنَّةَ عَمَلُهُ قَالُوا وَلَا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
قَالَ وَلَا أَنَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَنِي اللَّهُ مِنْهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ"

1 **“Follow the right course, seek nearness, and give glad tidings. Verily, none of you will enter Paradise by his deeds alone. They said: Not even you, O Messenger of Allah? The Prophet said: Not even me, unless Allah grants me his mercy.”**

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6463 and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2818

In this narration, the Messenger ordered with steadfastness which is al-Saddād and perfecting ones; intentions, sayings and actions.

The actions are a means of attaining steadfastness, however, the means does not lead to the goal, unless it is with the favour and generosity of Allāh.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله said:

"أَنَّ الْإِسْتِقَامَةَ وَالْمُقَارَبَةَ لَا تُنْجِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ. فَلَا يَرْكَنُ أَحَدٌ إِلَى عَمَلِهِ. وَلَا يُعْجَبُ بِهِ.
وَلَا يَرَى أَنَّ نَجَاتَهُ بِهِ، بَلْ إِنَّمَا نَجَاتُهُ بِرَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَعَفْوِهِ وَفَضْلِهِ."

2 **“Steadfastness and nearness will not save anyone on the day of judgement. So let no one be content with his actions, not they be amazed by them, and let them not see their actions are their saviour. Verily, a person will only be saved by the mercy, pardon, and excellence of Allāh.”**

Madārij al-Sālikīn By Ibn al-Qayyim 2/105

The Sirāt



Chapter Eight

There are two paths; the path in this life and a path in the hereafter. If one is steadfast upon the path in this life, then that will be their state on the path in the hereafter.

On the day of judgement, a path is laid over the mouth of the hell-fire.

1 As Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿وَإِنْ مِّنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا -
ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جَنَّتًا﴾

“There is none of you who will not pass over it. ‘This is’ a decree your Lord must fulfil. Then We will deliver those who were devout, leaving the wrongdoers there on their knees.”

Surah Maryam: 71-72

2 Ibn al-Qayyim said:

"فَمَنْ هُدِيَ فِي هَذِهِ الدَّارِ إِلَى صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ، الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ بِهِ رَسُولَهُ، وَأَنْزَلَ بِهِ
كُتُبَهُ، هُدِيَ هُنَاكَ إِلَى الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ، الْمَوْصِلِ إِلَى جَنَّتِهِ وَدَارِ ثَوَابِهِ"

“Whoever is guided in this life to Allāh’s straight path, the reason for which He sent His messengers and sent down His books for, then he will be guided to the straight path in the next life, the path that leads to paradise, the place of reward.”

Madārij al-Sālikīn By Ibn al-Qayyim 1/10

The servant’s firmness on the path in this life decides their firmness upon the path in the next life.

Doubts and Desires

Chapter Nine

There are matters which prevent one from attaining steadfastness and they are important to know, so that one can stay away from them.

As the poet said:

عرفت الشر لا للشر رولكن لتوقيه ••• ومن لا يعرف الشر من الخير يقع فيه

I learnt the evil, not for the evil, but to stay away from it

•••

and whoever does not know the evil will fall into it

Hudhayfah Ibn al-Yammān رضي الله عنه said:

1

"انَّ النَّاسُ يَسْأَلُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ الْخَيْرِ، وَكُنْتُ أَسْأَلُهُ عَنِ الشَّرِّ مَخَافَةَ أَنْ يُدْرِكَنِي"

"The people used to ask Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) about good, but I used to ask him about evil for fear that it might overtake me"

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 3606

These matters which are obstacles to steadfastness are; doubts of misguidance and desires of transgression. Allāh ﷻ said:

2

﴿وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ﴾

"Indeed, that is My Path—perfectly straight. So follow it and do not follow other ways, for they will lead you away from His Way."

Surah An-An'ām: 153

It has been reported in the Musnad of Imām Ahmad, on the authority of 'Abdillāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه that he said:

3

"خَطَّ لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَطًّا، ثُمَّ قَالَ : هَذَا سَبِيلُ اللَّهِ. ثُمَّ خَطَّ خُطُوطًا عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَعَنْ شِمَالِهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ : هَذِهِ سُبُلٌ عَلَى كُلِّ سَبِيلٍ مِنْهَا شَيْطَانٌ يَدْعُو إِلَيْهِ. ثُمَّ قَرَأَ : {وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ}"

"The Messenger of Allāh drew a line and said: This is the way of Allāh. Then he drew lines on its left and its right and said: These are ways, upon every way there is a devil calling to it. Then he read: Indeed, that is My Path—perfectly straight. So follow it and do not follow other ways, for they will lead you away from His Way."

Musnad Ahmad 4142

Desires are the major and minor sins. While, doubts are disbelief and innovation. Some of the Salaf said:

3

"ما أَمَرَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِأَمْرٍ إِلَّا وَلِلشَّيْطَانِ فِيهِ نَزْغَتَانِ: إِمَّا إِلَى تَفْرِيطٍ وَتَقْصِيرٍ، وَإِمَّا إِلَى مَجَاوِزَةٍ وَغُلُوٍّ، وَلَا يَبَالِي بِأَيِّهِمَا ظَفَرَ"

"Allāh did not order with something except that the Shaytān has for it two evil temptations: laziness and falling short, or exceeding the boundaries and extremism, and he does not care which succeeds."

Negligence and extremism are two tactics the Shaytān to deviate one from the straight path.

Imitating the Disbelievers

Chapter Ten

Imitating the disbelievers is from the greatest reasons for turning away from steadfastness.

1 Contemplate over the meaning of Allāh’s statement:

﴿اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ - صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾

“Guide us along the Straight Path, the Path of those You have blessed—not those You are displeased with [Jews], or those who are astray [Christians].”

Surah Al-Fātihah: 6-7

To be upon the straight path one has to avoid the path of the Jews and the Christians.

The corruption of the Jews is from the angle of actions, whereas, the corruption of the Christians is from the angle of knowledge. For verily, the Jews had knowledge but did not implement it, whereas, the Christians acted without knowledge.

Therefore, the corruption that is found in conjunction with steadfastness is either from imitation of the Jews; by a person having knowledge but not implementing it, or from imitation of the Christians; by a person acting without any knowledge.

2 The Prophet ﷺ said:

"لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ شِبْرًا شِبْرًا وَذِرَاعًا بِذِرَاعٍ، حَتَّىٰ لَوْ دَخَلُوا جُحْرَ ضَبٍّ تَبِعْتُمُوهُمْ"

“You will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, span by span and cubit by cubit. So much so that even if they entered a hole of a lizard, you would follow them”

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 7320 and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2669



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